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*Comment AOR 1997-12*

July 9, 1997

Federal Election Commission  
1325 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20463

Dear Members of the Federal Election Commission,

I realize you do not decide matters based on public outcry, but nevertheless, I urge you to not grant the request of Representative Costello to use campaign funds for the purpose of paying off lawyers.

Whether you are aware of it or not, it is a fact that Costello has now wrested control of one of the most corrupt machines in politics. It has held control of this county for over half a century and inspite of the more educated section of the county voting against it, manages to keep power by buying votes in poor sections in massive numbers. The control this machine has is legendary and very, very tight, managing to control the judiciary and have its way whenever and however it wants. The feeling of being above the law has finally lead one of its minions to get caught, though Costello has managed very effectively not to leave any paper trail. Deals and orders were done on Saturday mornings in friends' garages, so that nothing can ever be proven. But it would be a travesty if what people donated to his campaign can now be used to help him wiggle out of his troubles.

I hope you leave no stone unturned in your effort to deny his request.

Sincerely,

*Donald A. Blaes*

Donald A. Blaes

cc: Representative Costello

# Campaign funds sought by Costello

## Says they are needed to pay legal fees

By Jennifer Loven

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rep. Jerry Costello is asking for permission to use campaign funds to pay legal fees associated with the obstruction-of-justice trial and conviction of a childhood friend and former business partner.



Costello, a lawyer, Amiel Cueto was convicted June 11 of trying to thwart a federal gambling investigation into

the \$48 million gambling empire of his client and business partner, Thomas Venezia. Venezia was convicted on racketeering charges in 1995.

Costello, a Belleville Democrat, was characterized as an "unindicted co-conspirator" throughout the case. The law does not mean he did anything wrong, and Costello has repeatedly denied any involvement in the scheme.

In a June 24 letter, Costello attorney Jeffrey Colman asked the Federal Election Commission to rule whether the congressman's campaign funds could be used to defray legal fees that have accumu-

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